

Lesson 10

Analysing Setting - Read the following description of setting taken from John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*:

The deep green pool of the Salinas River was still in the late afternoon. Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Gabilan Mountains, and the hilltops were rosy in the sun. But by the pool among the mottled sycamores, a pleasant shade had fallen.

A water snake glided smoothly up the pool, twisting its periscope head from side to side; and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows. A silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by the head, and the beak swallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically. A far rush of wind sounded and a gust drove through the tops of the trees like a wave. The sycamore leaves turned up their silver sides, the brown, dry leaves on the ground scudded a few feet. And row on row of tiny wind waves flowed up the pool's green surface. As quickly as it had come, the wind died, and the clearing was quiet again. The heron stood in the shallows, motionless and waiting. Another little water snake swam up the pool, turning its periscope head from side to side.

Reading: What impression of the setting do you have? Does it create a particular mood or feeling? Does this change at all as the description develops? Write a detailed paragraph which analyses at least 5 quotations.

Writing: You should be taking the opportunity to take a daily exercise in your local community. Pick a place along your walk that interests you (you can describe it in a positive or a negative way) and describe it in detail. Use Steinbeck's description of the Salinas valley to help you.